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Sixty-third year

Letter dated 19 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Joint Statement by the Chamber Council of the Council of Federation and the Council of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning the consequences of the self-proclamation of independence by the territory of Kosovo (Serbia) adopted on 18 February 2008 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 85 of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the sixty-third regular session of the General Assembly, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

* A/63/50.

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Annex to the letter dated 19 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Statement of the Chamber Council of the Federation Council and the Council of the State Duma concerning the consequences of the self-proclamation of independence by the territory of Kosovo (Serbia)

18 February 2008

The Chamber Council of the Federation Council and the Council of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation have adopted the following joint statement of the two chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning the consequences of the self-proclamation of independence by the territory of Kosovo (Serbia).

The Chamber Council of the Federation Council and the Council of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation express their extreme concern that, in violation of the basic rules of international law and the spirit and letter of applicable and unimplemented United Nations Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1244 (1999), the territory of Kosovo (Serbia) has declared its independence and secession from Serbia.

Kosovo separatism would have had no prospects had it not been supported from the outset by Western States, first and foremost the United States of America. There has been an active effort to disrupt the balance between law and force in international relations, to erode the importance of negotiations as a just means of settling conflicts, to ignore the legitimate interests of one of the parties to the conflict and to keep silent about ongoing human rights violations based on ethnicity.

Serbia is a democratic State which exists within internationally recognized borders and is a Member of the United Nations. The action taken today to dismember the territory of the country, whose sovereignty over Kosovo is recognized by the United Nations Security Council, can be explained only as an attempt to carry to its logical conclusion the illegal operation by NATO member States against the former Yugoslavia of 1999. The right of nations to self-determination cannot justify the recognition of Kosovo's independence while at the same time there is a refusal even to discuss similar actions by other self-proclaimed States which have attained de facto independence exclusively through their own efforts.

The Chamber Council of the Federation Council and the Council of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation declare that it is the leaders of the States which have sponsored the regime in Pristina and which now support Kosovo's independence who bear direct responsibility for the virtual breakdown in the negotiating process, in which the Serbian side has shown maximum flexibility and willingness to compromise. They will also bear full responsibility for the inevitable aggravation of existing territorial conflicts in the world and the emergence of new ones, the spread of radical ideas and political

trends resulting from the precedent set by Kosovo and the destructive impact on the entire system of international law and international stability.

The Chamber Council of the Federation Council and the Council of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation also draw attention to resolution 1595 (2008) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which on behalf of all European nations refers to the need for the "continuation of the talks on the basis of the UNSC Resolution 1244 and the attainment of a compromise solution in the near future, with a view to preventing Kosovo from becoming a powder-keg and ultimately a frozen conflict in the Balkans".

The Chamber Council of the Federation Council and the Council of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation fully share the position of the parliamentary forum of the most representative European organization and note that the leaders of the countries which have provoked the breakdown in the negotiating process have placed themselves in opposition to the interests of the peoples of Europe through their actions.

In the face of significant threats to international stability and to the interests of the Russian Federation resulting from the irresponsible policies of Western States, the leadership of the Russian Federation must take all the necessary steps to defend the principles of international law, justice and security throughout the world.

The Chamber Council of the Federation Council and the Council of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation consider it impossible to recognize Kosovo as a sovereign State and to admit Kosovo as a Member of the United Nations and of other international organizations committed to the basic principles of international law. They call on the leadership of the Russian Federation to make appropriate diplomatic efforts to prevent such developments from occurring.

Now that the situation in Kosovo has set an international precedent, existing territorial conflicts must be considered by the Russian Federation in the light of the Kosovo situation and the practical steps of the relevant States concerning the status of Kosovo.

The Chamber Council of the Federation Council and the Council of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation consider that recognition of the independent status of Kosovo would make it necessary to establish a new system of relations between the Russian Federation and self-proclaimed States in the Russian Federation's natural sphere of interest, especially in the post-Soviet area.

S. M. Mironov
Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

B. V. Gryzlov
Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Moscow, 18 February 2008